

EXECUTIVE

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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AIRCRAFT & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

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THE WHITE HOUSE

October 23, 1962

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The Honorable John F. Kennedy
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

In the difficult and dangerous days ahead, you have our support and our prayers, for we know of your deep personal commitment to the cause of world peace and your deep concern for the freedom and security of our people.

The people of the world will understand that your decision in the Cuban crisis was necessitated by the provocative efforts of the Soviet Union to turn Cuba into a base for aggressive military action as a further step in their drive for world domination.

Your decision in the Cuban crisis rests upon a sound moral basis. During the past month when less calm and less responsible voices in America were urging premature and ill-advised action against Cuba, you demonstrated restraint and mature judgment. You acted decisively and determinedly only after there was undisputed evidence to provide the moral basis for the commitment of American power.

To have acted prematurely without conclusive evidence would have been an act of aggression. As a result, we would have forfeited the support of our allies and we would have lost our friends in the world.

To have delayed action after the undisputed evidence was available would have been appeasement and an act of moral cowardice. You met the moral test of leadership which demands the delicate balance between your dedication to work for peace and your determination to defend our security.

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Mr. President, in your historic speech before the United Nations on September 25, 1961, you expressed the hopes and aspirations of people everywhere when you called upon the leadership of the Soviet Union to join in a decade of development in a common effort to harness man's genius and the tools of science and abundance to raise living standards, to abolish poverty, to wage a massive attack against ignorance and disease, to the rewarding pursuit of man's peaceful purpose and not to the total destruction of war.

You, Mr. President, have expressed the longing for peace which fills the hearts and minds of people everywhere. America does not want war, nor do the people of any other nation, including the Soviet Union, for nuclear war would be an act of total madness at a time when peace has become a condition of human survival.

You have said many times that the only war the people of the world want to wage is the war against man's ancient enemies -- the war against poverty, ignorance and disease -- for this in truth is the only war that can be won.

In the present crisis you have once again justifiably placed the responsibility on the shoulders of Mr. Khrushchev, for it was his act of converting Cuba into a military base with aggressive nuclear capability that has created the current crisis.

Mr. President, we stand with you. We pray that Mr. Khrushchev will understand both our nation's devotion to peace and our determination to defend our freedom and our security, that Mr. Khrushchev will understand the wisdom and the compelling urgency of taking affirmative steps to eliminate the threat to world peace which he has created in Cuba. We share your hope that Mr. Khrushchev will act with responsibility in this situation. If he does, this could be the first hopeful step toward easing tension in the world so that meaningful progress can be made toward disarmament, as you have urged, under conditions and with adequate safeguards to insure a lasting and just peace between the nations and the achievement of brotherhood among men.

The Honorable John F. Kennedy

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October 23, 1962

Mr. President, we are at your call for any service or any support that we might render you and our nation in this critical hour of crisis, when peace and security are in balance.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Walter P. Reuther". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Walter P. Reuther, President
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